
LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES POLICY ENHANCEMENTS Additions Vigorously Respond to California's Public and Legislature

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.– The Legislative Subcommittee of the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) tonight approved policies designed to establish model standards—in partnership with the Legislature and the public—for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) and stem cell research.

"We are always striving to enhance our policies, and remain grateful for the support of Senators Perata, Ortiz, Speier, and Dunn," said ICOC Chair Robert Klein. "It is critical to public confidence in the CIRM that there be a clear understanding: we are building the finest standards for medicine, ethics, and competitive peer review in every aspect of the stem cell program. Our hope is that our collaboration with the public and the Legislature will create a model to serve as the standard for stem cell research in the nation."

Zach Hall, Ph.D, the Interim President of the CIRM, said a number of the standards that the subcommittee will recommend to the ICOC on July 12th in Irvine surpass the stringency of the National Institutes of Health and University of California standards.

The subcommittee approved the policy enhancements first introduced at the June 6 ICOC meeting in Sacramento which include:

- requiring divestment by ICOC members of financial investments in any business entity with more than 5% of its annual budget in stem cell therapies and in any business organization receiving a grant;
- broadening conflict of interest provisions for working group members;
- providing earlier public availability of full disclosure of working group funding recommendations;
- requiring comprehensive reports to the State Legislature summarizing grant awards and recipients;
- ensuring increased public access to meetings of the Grants Working Group, the Standards Working Group and the Facilities Working group;
- and providing increased access to working group records.

The subcommittee also voted to recommend that the ICOC establish a super-majority of 70% to amend any of the policies voted on today.

Today's actions follow previous efforts to increase the transparency and effectiveness of the CIRM. On May 23rd the ICOC adopted the National Academy of Sciences' guidelines for human embryonic stem cell research as CIRM interim standards. The guidelines, released on an accelerated schedule to accommodate the CIRM's timeline for grant distribution; these standards were embraced by the CIRM leadership through their development, starting with a conference cosponsored with the NAS in December 2004 in Irvine.

Next week, the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) is expected to present an interim report on Assembly Concurrent Resolution 24, an extension of ACR 252, which will provide specific recommendations on handling intellectual property derived from stem cell research under state contracts in California. In December 2004, the CCST invited the ICOC to appoint two of its members to join the study group and deliberations. Since the January meeting, ICOC board members Susan Bryant and Michael Goldberg have served in that capacity.

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